

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for enabling communication between a first network in which control functions and user functions are combined in a first node and a second network in which user functions and control functions are separately implemented in second and third nodes, respectively, the method comprising the steps of:

determining whether received data contains control data; and
if the received data contains control data, extracting control data from the received data and forwarding the control data to the third node for resource handling.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein if the received data does not contain control data, the received data is processed by the second node and then forwarded to the first node.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the steps of extracting and forwarding are performed in the second node.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first network is a second generation packet data network, and the second network is a third generation packet data network.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the first network is a second generation Global Packet Radio Service (GPRS) network, and the second network is a third generation Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS) network.

6. An apparatus for enabling communication between a first network in which control functions and user functions are combined in a first node and a second network in which control functions and user functions are separately implemented in second and third nodes, respectively, the apparatus comprising:

a detector for detecting whether received data contains control data;
a protocol device for extracting control data from the received data and forwarding the control data to the third node for resource handling, if the detector determines that the received data contains control data.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein if the received data does not contain control data, the received data is forwarded by the third node to the first node.

8. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the device is included in third node.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the first network is a second generation packet data network, and the second network is a third generation packet data network.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the first network is a second 5 generation Global Packet Radio Service (GPRS) network, and the second network is a third generation Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS) network.

11. A system for enabling communication between a first network in which 10 control functions and user functions are combined in the same node and another network in which user functions and control function are implemented in separate nodes, the system comprising:

a first node in the first network, wherein user functions and control functions are handled in the first node;

a second node in the second network wherein user functions are handled in the second node;

15 a third node in the second network wherein control functions are handled in the third node; and

a device for determining whether received data contains control data, and, if received data contains control data, extracting control data from the received data and forwarding the control data to the third node.

20 12. The system of claim 11, wherein if the third node wants to forward control data to the first node, the third node first forwards the control data to the second node, which converts the control data to GTP and forwards the GTP control data to the first node.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein the device is included in the second node.

25 14. The system of claim 11, wherein the first network is a second generation packet data network, and the second network is a third generation packet data network.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the first network is a second generation Global Packet Radio Service (GPRS) network, and the second network is a third generation Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS) network.